

EXHIBIT 1

July 31, 2024

The Honorable William F Kuntz, II
United States District Court
225 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Re: Gorgi Naumovski

Dear Judge Kuntz:

My name is Gorgi Naumovski and I am 56 years old and currently in front of Your Honor for my actions that I deeply regret. I currently work for a public cannabis company (MariMed, Inc), hold the title of VP of Business Development, and report directly to the CEO. I've been with the company since 2014 when we applied for a Medical Marijuana license in Illinois. I am an only child of Jordana & Blagoja Naumovski, who immigrated to Canada from Macedonia in 1964. My biggest accomplishment is being a proud father to four amazing children, Michael and Krista—Kassandra & Gorgi Jr., who all reside in Canada. Also, I became a stepfather to Afton Robinson, who I have had the pleasure of being a father figure since she was eight years old. All my children have grown to be loving, kind, and terrific people. Recently, I have become a grandfather to two beautiful little girls, Mila (2 years old) & Sofija (4 months old), who I can't wait to hold on a regular basis. I am a loving husband to Rosie Naumovski, the most supportive, patient, and caring partner I could ever have asked for. Rosie is my forever soulmate. We have a 9-year-old Belgian Malinois named Ruckus and four cats that have shown up on the property and never left. Your Honor, this is my family, which I love very much.

I will try to describe who Gorgi Naumovski is as a person. This is likely the most important letter I will ever write, and I genuinely appreciate Your Honors' time reviewing the words on these pages.

I grew up in Toronto, Canada, with two loving parents. They both came to Canada with nothing but a suitcase and a dream, which I genuinely admire today. My mother worked in a factory as a machine operator for a large printing company and would try to work as much overtime as possible to provide for her family. My father came to Canada as a tailor and worked in the garment industry for many years before changing professions and working for a restaurant at a private golf club as a chef's kitchen helper. My dad (which they called Bobby at work because they couldn't pronounce his Macedonian name) would often tell stories about his days at work and some of the unique dishes he would create; he loved his job but always wanted a better life for his only son, than the one he had growing up. Both my parents stayed at these jobs until they retired. My parents, who had limited English, worked hard every day and never complained; they managed to make a living in a new country. They worked hard and realized their dream of owning a home and car when they saved

enough money, and the dream became a reality in 1977. They have instilled this work ethic in me, and I wouldn't change it for the world.

I went to public schools and graduated high school with my diploma. I often struggled in school with my studies and was an average student at best. I only ever failed one class, it was French, and I didn't like the feeling of failing at something, so I made it up in summer school and never had to do summer school ever again. I'm not sure why I struggled, but I always assumed it was because English was my second language growing up. However, sports became my focus when I got to high school. I figured I had a natural ability and could play just about any sport. Some of these sports were competitive soccer and hockey; my mom or dad would attend almost every game I ever played, which I will never forget. Looking back, it was a huge commitment by them both. I worked odd jobs since I was 14 years old, held two jobs throughout high school, and managed to save enough money for my first car. During my last year of high school, I thought long and hard about what I wanted to do with my life; one day, it hit me when I was hiking through the woods near our home. I wanted to become a conservation officer. I really liked being outdoors and always felt in touch with nature, and I thought this would be my career path by preserving the beautiful land we live in, but two things ultimately altered my decision. One was that I had seen how hard my parents worked and didn't want to put the financial burden on them to attend college; I figured I would continue work after school until I could afford to do it myself. Secondly, at the end of my fifth year (we went to grade 13 in Canada) of high school, I discovered I would become a father, what a life-changing moment.

I was 19 years old, and my whole life changed; my girlfriend Ljubica (Luba) at the time, who soon became the mother of my firstborn, decided we would become a family. What a scary time for us both. We married at the city hall in Toronto and started our family; we welcomed baby Michael Joseph Naumovski and started our life as parents. We had great family support from both our parents and soon had Krista Eve (born on Christmas Eve in a snowstorm), Kassandra Eva & Gorgi Jandre Jr. All of our kids are about two years apart; I could not have been happier than holding them as babies and watching my children grow up. I realized I had to grow up quickly myself and had no time to hang out with my friends or play sports or anything else a young adult might be doing at that age; I had a family to raise. I worked nonstop and would do about any job that would help me raise my children; I wanted to give them more than my parents gave me. I worked as a tile setter laying flooring in new homes, did janitorial work, and did carpet cleaning; I got my CDL license, drove a transport truck, and worked construction framing/drywall, warehouse management, and kitchen cabinets/granite fabrication. The list is long, and I was not afraid to do any type of work. I always figured I would learn it if someone showed me.

I can say that both my wife (at the time) and I were great parents to our children; we loved them, they had a roof over their heads, food on the table, and clothes on their backs, and we supported them in any sport or school activity. I had the pleasure of being involved in their activities in some way or another by coaching my children in hockey, softball, and soccer. Out of curiosity, I once checked the kid's hockey schedule and realized we had over 400 trips to the arena in one year. We ran from rink to rink and city to city to be present, because when they looked in the stands or on the bench, they would see at least one parent cheering them on. I was an only child, and my children gave me so much joy. I wanted them to be the best they could be. When it came to school and applying themselves, they were incredible kids.

I always say I had 3 traumatic events in my life, the first being in the early 2000s when my wife decided to stray outside our marriage, and although I (we) tried to make it work for a few years, the marriage wasn't getting any better and ultimately, she wanted a divorce and I agreed. I pictured myself being married to the same person my whole life and raising children and my children having a family of their own. Unfortunately, people change, and it's life. The process of divorce was, at that point, the most stressful period of my life, and to this day, I always try to be supportive of people who have gone or going through this event in their lives. We continued to co-parent, and I had my kids every other week and wanted to make their lives as normal as possible.

So, life went on, and the stress turned to happiness when I spent one faithful day in Chicago in September 2007. I met my future wife by chance at a restaurant. Suddenly, we commuted between Illinois and Toronto every chance we could, sometimes every other week. We spent countless hours talking on the phone about our family, what went on in our day, talked about our kids, and we really enjoyed the conversations. Even now, we speak multiple times a day, regardless of our travels. Rosie has a daughter named Afton, and I have four kids. So, we spent family time with all the kids and wanted to ensure everybody could get along if Rosie and I would take our relationship to the next level. Afton suddenly went from an only child to a party of five and, to this day, they remain very close as siblings.

Everything was going great. In the summer of 2008, I was diagnosed with testicular cancer, which led to my second most traumatic event. It happened so quickly, and my life flashed in front of my eyes because when you hear the word cancer, you automatically think this is it; my life is over. I thought of my family and not being in their lives, missing all the critical milestones coming their way, the thought of not being there for my daughters and walking them down the wedding aisle and their children's baptisms and birthday parties, and/or watching them play sports and having grandpa giving them a few pointers and being there when they need me in their lives. Rosie was the backbone and most supportive person; she held my hand in the hospital and kept everybody positive during this time. At once, I knew she was the one for me, and I prayed nonstop to give me a chance to have this life with my family; I thought I would do anything to make this relationship work. I guess God had another plan for me, and I am grateful every day that I'm still here, and I thank God for sparing my life. This event changed how I looked at things, and I promised myself to be a better person, give back to the people around me, and help people when I could. I have done my best in that category. I personally pick up over 600 hundred turkeys every Thanksgiving and pass them out to employees and families in need during Thanksgiving. The idea came to me when I remembered my dad coming with a turkey that he received from his place of work and how proud he was of bringing that bird home to his family. It makes me proud that I could pass that feeling to another family at this time of year. I helped people at the medical marijuana dispensaries who couldn't afford the RSO oil and helped them with cancer treatments. I love animals and did food drives for the local shelters, donated to the youth club every year in our local community, and in my younger years, helped at the old age home on Thursdays with bingo night, which was very rewarding and a fun time interacting with elderly people that just wanted to have a conversation with someone. To describe who I am today, I would use these simple words to describe myself: sensitive, loving, compassionate, trustworthy, and a nice, caring person.

Life changed for me, and in 2010, Rosie and I decided to get married and call Du Quoin, Illinois, home, a small town of about 6000 residents. It's rural America, and I welcomed the quiet time that

came with this setting. We decided to live here till Afton would be of age, and we would eventually move back to Canada to spend more time with my family and take care of my aging parents. So here I am in the USA with an old beat-up 2002 Ford pickup truck and no job, with a lady who loved me for who I was and not what I had, living in a small town with no friends, in a new country. In a way, I felt like my parents coming to Canada in the '60s, but I have the hard work ethic that my parents had and had the thought that if you just worked hard, good things would happen. I continued to commute back and forth and drove 12 hours each way to spend a minimum of one week a month or every other week in the early days just to be with my family in Canada; on occasions, I would have my family in Canada spend time with us in Illinois. We didn't have much, but it never mattered as long as we had our health, and happiness. People always asked how you do this back and forth; I really didn't mind the travel. I guess it was from my truck driving days, and it gave me joy to see everybody when I arrived. I became Afton's stepfather and have watched her grow into a beautiful, sweet, respectful girl who works hard at everything she does. I've always related to her since we were both only children, and I always tried to guide her as best I could through my experiences. I was happy to give her a stable home environment.

This leads me to the most terrifying traumatic moment of my life, which is why Your Honor is reading this letter. The arrest in the early morning hours in front of Afton and Rosie, sitting in county jail, and court proceedings, the financial strain, and the unknown have taken a huge toll on my family and me; I don't even know how I could express it adequately to Your Honor. I think about my situation daily and regret every moment that led me to this place. I think about Your Honor and respect the decision you will have to make in my case. If I could turn back the clock and practice what I've preached to my kids and what my parents taught me about doing the right thing, I would do it in a heartbeat and without hesitation. I've missed critical moments in my children's lives. Mila, my first grandchild, was born with a hole in the heart and needed open heart surgery at 6 months old; I couldn't be there to support my son Michael in this difficult life moment for his young family and what he was going through on the most challenging days, emotional for all of us, to say the least. I try to exude calmness in front of my wife and family so my current situation doesn't stress them further than it has. I have many sleepless nights, and this weight that is on my shoulders is unbearable some days. Health-wise, I know it has taken a toll on me; I have high blood pressure and some heart issues that we are keeping an eye on. People I thought were friends distanced themselves, but I realized they weren't friends. I saw the people who stuck by my side regardless of my circumstances, and they provided words of encouragement and support. The inability to take my mom to her doctor appointments and, ultimately, at the age of 85, she had a risky knee replacement, which she continues to heal from. Moments like this strain someone who is a caring person like myself. I realize that as much as I want to turn back time, I can't. What I can do is move forward, be a better person, and ask for forgiveness.

Your Honor, I promise I will never be involved in the healthcare industry or get involved in something or someone that could take my freedom away from me ever again. I realize my mistakes, and for that, I will be forever remorseful for my actions. I will try to do good in the world that lifts people and expect nothing in return. I will teach my kids and their kids about my experiences and make them better people, so they don't ever fall on the wrong side of the law. I should never have been in Your Honor's presence because I know better than that, and I'm truly sorry. I pray daily that Your Honor has mercy on me for my actions and I promise I will not disappoint you in that decision.

I want to take a moment to thank for allowing me to travel on two occasions to visit my family in Canada. I surprised my mother and father by just walking into the house and seeing the tears roll down my mother's cheeks and the smile on my father's face. I watched my granddaughters both get baptized in our Macedonian church and have Sunday dinner with the family. I took my mother to her doctor's appointment the other day and sat there with her for 3 hours and talked about life, then took my mom to her favorite fast-food restaurant and bought her a burger, fries, and coke for lunch. These are moments I will carry in my thoughts forever and am eternally grateful to Your Honor.
THANK YOU!

In closing I want to say thank you for taking the time to read my letter and know everything I've written is from the heart.

Respectfully,



Gorgi Naumovski